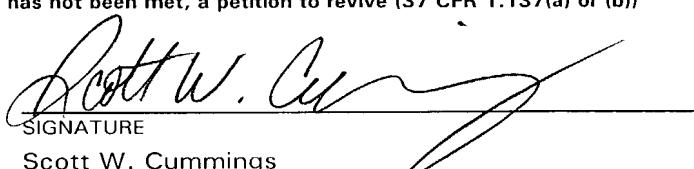


FORM PTO-1390 (Rev. 9-2001)		U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE		ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NUMBER
TRANSMITTAL LETTER TO THE UNITED STATES DESIGNATED/ELECTED OFFICE (DO/EO/US) CONCERNING A FILING UNDER 35 U.S.C. 371				029777-008
				U.S. APPLICATION NO. (If known, see 37 CFR 1.5)
				Unassigned 10/049880
INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO. PCT/DE00/02800		INTERNATIONAL FILING DATE August 17, 2000		PRIORITY DATE CLAIMED August 19, 1999
TITLE OF INVENTION SEMI-FINISHED AND FINISHED PRODUCTS MADE OF AUSTENITIC SPECIAL STEEL, AND METHOD FOR THE MANUFACTURE THEREOF				
APPLICANT(S) FOR DO/EO/US Heinrich FRIEDERICH and Reinhard SCHMOOK				
<p>Applicant herewith submits to the United States Designated/Elected Office (DO/EO/US) the following items and other information:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This is a FIRST submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371. 2. <input type="checkbox"/> This is a SECOND or SUBSEQUENT submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371. 3. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This is an express request to begin national examination procedures (35 U.S.C. 371(f)). The submission must include items (5), (6), (9) and (21) indicated below 4. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The US has been elected by the expiration of 19 months from the priority date (Article 31). 5. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A copy of the International Application as filed (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2)) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> is attached hereto (required only if not communicated by the International Bureau). b. <input type="checkbox"/> has been communicated by the International Bureau. c. <input type="checkbox"/> is not required, as the application was filed in the United States Receiving Office (RO/US). 6. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> An English language translation of the International Application as filed (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2)) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> is attached hereto. b. <input type="checkbox"/> has been previously submitted under 35 U.S.C. 154(d)(4). 7. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amendments to the claims of the International Application under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3)) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> are attached hereto (required only if not communicated by the International Bureau). b. <input type="checkbox"/> have been communicated by the International Bureau. c. <input type="checkbox"/> have not been made; however, the time limit for making such amendments has NOT expired. d. <input type="checkbox"/> have not been made and will not be made. 8. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> An English language translation of the amendments to the claims under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3)). 9. <input type="checkbox"/> An oath or declaration of the inventor(s) (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(4)). 10. <input type="checkbox"/> An English language translation of the annexes to the International Preliminary Examination Report under PCT Article 36 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(5)). 				
Items 11 to 20 below concern document(s) or information included:				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. <input type="checkbox"/> An Information Disclosure Statement under 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98. 12. <input type="checkbox"/> An assignment document for recording. A separate cover sheet in compliance with 37 CFR 3.28 and 3.31 is included. 13. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A FIRST preliminary amendment 14. <input type="checkbox"/> A SECOND or SUBSEQUENT preliminary amendment. 15. <input type="checkbox"/> A substitute specification. 16. <input type="checkbox"/> A change of power of attorney and/or address letter. 17. <input type="checkbox"/> A computer-readable form of the sequence listing in accordance with PCT Rule 13ter.2 and 35 U.S.C. 1.821 - 1.825. 18. <input type="checkbox"/> A second copy of the published international application under 35 U.S.C. 154(d)(4). 19. <input type="checkbox"/> A second copy of the English language translation of the international application under 35 U.S.C. 154(d)(4). 20. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other items or information: 				
Verification of Translation, International Search Report and English translation, amended claim replacement sheets and English translation				



21839

U.S. APPLICATION NO. (If none, see 37 CFR 1.6) Unassigned	INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO PCT/DE00/02800	ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NUMBER 029777-008
21. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The following fees are submitted:		CALCULATIONS
Basic National Fee (37 CFR 1.492(a)(1)-(5)): Neither international preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) nor international search fee (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2)) paid to USPTO and International Search Report not prepared by the EPO or JPO \$1,040.00 (960) International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) not paid to USPTO but International Search Report prepared by the EPO or JPO \$890.00 (970) International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) not paid to USPTO but international search fee (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2)) paid to USPTO \$740.00 (958) International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) paid to USPTO but all claims did not satisfy provisions of PCT Article 33(1)-(4) \$710.00 (956) International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) paid to USPTO and all claims satisfied provisions of PCT Article 33(1)-(4) \$100.00 (962)		PTO USE ONLY
ENTER APPROPRIATE BASIC FEE AMOUNT =		\$ 890.00
Surcharge of \$130.00 (154) for furnishing the oath or declaration later than months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(e)). 20 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 <input type="checkbox"/>		\$
Claims	Number Filed	Number Extra
Total Claims	12 -20 =	0
Independent Claims	2 -3 =	0
Multiple dependent claim(s) (if applicable)		+\$280.00 (968)
TOTAL OF ABOVE CALCULATIONS =		\$ 890.00
Reduction for 1/2 for filing by small entity, if applicable (see below).		+ \$ 0
SUBTOTAL =		\$ 890.00
Processing fee of \$130.00 (156) for furnishing the English translation later than months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(f)). 20 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 <input type="checkbox"/>		+\$ 0
TOTAL NATIONAL FEE =		\$ 890.00
Fee for recording the enclosed assignment (37 CFR 1.21(h)). The assignment must be accompanied by an appropriate cover sheet (37 CFR 3.28, 3.31). \$40.00 (581) per property 		+ \$ 0
TOTAL FEES ENCLOSED =		\$ 890.00
		Amount to be refunded: \$
		charged: \$
a. <input type="checkbox"/> Small entity status is hereby claimed. b. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A check in the amount of \$ 890.00 to cover the above fees is enclosed. c. <input type="checkbox"/> Please charge my Deposit Account No. 02-4800 in the amount of \$ to cover the above fees. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed. d. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-4800. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.		
NOTE: Where an appropriate time limit under 37 CFR 1.494 or 1.495 has not been met, a petition to revive (37 CFR 1.137(a) or (b)) must be filed and granted to restore the application to pending status.		
SEND ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO: Ronald L. Grudziecki BURNS, DOANE, SWECKER & MATHIS, L.L.P. P.O. Box 1404 Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1404 (703) 836-6620		
 SIGNATURE Scott W. Cummings NAME 41,567 REGISTRATION NUMBER		February 19, 2002 DATE

Patent
Attorney's Docket No. 029777-008

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Patent Application of)
Heinrich FRIEDERICH et al.) Group Art Unit: Unassigned
Application No.: PCT/DE00/02800) Examiner: Unassigned
Filed: August 17, 2000)
For: SEMI-FINISHED AND FINISHED)
PRODUCTS MADE OF)
AUSTENITIC SPECIAL STEEL,)
AND METHOD FOR THE)
MANUFACTURE THEREOF)

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

Prior to examination of the above-identified application, please amend the claims of published PCT application PCT/DE00/02800, as specified below.

IN THE ABSTRACT:

Please add the Abstract attached hereto as a separate sheet.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please replace claims 1-12 with the corresponding amended claims.

1. (Amended) Semi-finished and finished products in the form of sheets, profiles or shafts made of corrosion-resistant, precipitation hardenable, austenitic special steel with a high interstitially dissolved nitrogen content, with substantially smooth

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surfaces, wherein the steel material is precipitation hardened in a zoned manner, and the steel has a chemical composition comprising:

C 0.08-0.115%;

Mn 1.5-4%;

Mo 0.3-1.5%;

Cr 17.5-20%;

Ni 10-13% ; and

N 0.2-0.5%

wherein the remainder is substantially composed of iron.

2. (Amended) Semi-finished and finished products according to claim 1, wherein the steel material is inductively precipitation hardened in a zoned manner.

3. (Amended) Semi-finished and finished products according to claim 1, wherein they are at least partly hardened in a surface layer, wherein the thickness of the precipitation hardened layer is less than 50%, preferably less than 30% and in particular less than 10% of the material thickness measured perpendicular to the surface.

4. (Amended) Semi-finished and finished products according to claim 1, wherein they are either sheets or profile rods with a substantially constant cross-section over their length.

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5. (Amended) Semi-finished and finished products according to claim 4,
wherein the profile cross-section is circular, elliptical, quadratic, hexagonal, octagonal, L-shaped, cross-shaped, U-shaped or double T-shaped.

6. (Amended) Semi-finished and finished products according to claim 5,
wherein the steel material is a sheet or a plate with substantially constant material
thickness.

7. (Amended) Finished product according to claim 1, wherein it is a shaft with
a diameter that varies along its axial length.

8. (Amended) Method for manufacturing semi-finished and finished products
from corrosion-resistant, precipitation hardenable austenitic special steel with a high
interstitially dissolved nitrogen content, wherein a steel material with the following
chemical composition is firstly manufactured:

C 0.082-0.115%;

Mn 1.5-4%;

Mo 0.3-1.5%;

Cr 17.5-20%;

Ni 10-13% ; and

N 0.2-0.5%

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wherein the remainder is substantially composed of iron, in that the material worked in the still hot, or re-heated state into semi-finished and finished products with a substantially smooth surface, and as required can also be cold-worked, and in that subsequently a precipitation hardening treatment is undertaken that affects at the most a part of the volume of the semi-finished and/or finished products.

9. (Amended) Method according to claim 8, wherein inductive precipitation hardening treatment is undertaken in a temperature range of 300°C to 550°C.

10. (Amended) Method according to claim 8, wherein inductive precipitation hardening treatment is undertaken such that the precipitation hardening only occurs in a surface layer with a layer thickness of 0.5 mm at the most.

11. (Amended) Method according to claim 8, wherein the material is substantially endless material or rod material or respectively sheet material that is passed continuously through an induction apparatus.

12. (Amended) Method according to claim 8, wherein instead of inductive treatment, precipitation hardening is done by laser irradiation.

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Please cancel claims 13-15 without prejudice or disclaimer.

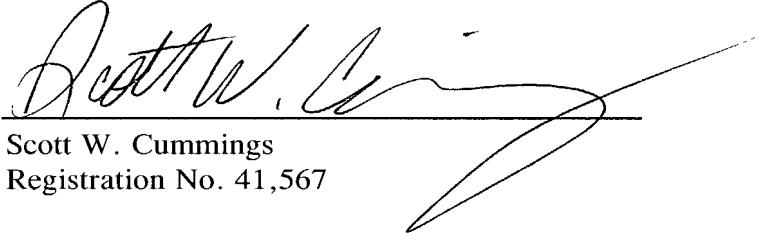
REMARKS

The amendments to the claims were made to remove multiple dependencies and place the claims in proper form. No new matter has been added. An Abstract is attached.

Early examination and allowance of claims 1-12, is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

BURNS, DOANE, SWECKER & MATHIS, L.L.P.

By: 

Scott W. Cummings
Registration No. 41,567

P.O. Box 1404
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1404
(703) 836-6620

Date: February 19, 2002

Application No. PCT/DE00/02800

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Marked-up Claims 1-12

1. (Amended) Semi-finished and finished products in the form of sheets, profiles or shafts made of corrosion-resistant, precipitation hardenable, austenitic special steel with a high interstitially dissolved nitrogen content, with substantially smooth surfaces, [characterised in that] wherein the steel material is precipitation hardened in a zoned manner, and [in that] the steel has a chemical composition comprising [within the following ranges]:

C 0.08-0.115 %;

Mn 1.5-4 %;

Mo 0.3-1.5 %;

Cr 17.5-20 %;

Ni 10-13 %; and

N 0.2-0.5 %

wherein the remainder is substantially composed of iron.

2. (Amended) Semi-finished and finished products according to claim 1, [characterised in that] wherein the steel material is inductively precipitation hardened in a zoned manner.

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Marked-up Claims 1-12

3. (Amended) Semi-finished and finished products according to claim 1 [or 2], [characterised in that] wherein they are at least partly hardened in a surface layer, wherein the thickness of the precipitation hardened layer is less than 50%, preferably less than 30% and in particular less than 10% of the material thickness measured perpendicular to the surface.

4. (Amended) Semi-finished and finished products according to [one of claims 1 to 3] claim 1, [characterised in that] wherein they are either sheets or profile rods with a substantially constant cross-section over their length [the steel has a chemical composition within the following ranges:

C 0.02-0.12%

Mn 1-16%

Mo 0-3%

Cr 16-26%

Ni 0-15%

N 0.2-0.9

wherein the rema

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Marked-up Claims 1-12

5. (Amended) Semi-finished and finished products according to [one of claims 1 to] claim 4, [characertised in that] wherein the profile cross-section is circular, elliptical, quadratic, hexagonal, octagonal, L-shaped, cross-shaped, U-shaped or double T-shaped [the steel has a chemical composition within the following ranges:

C 0.08-0.115%

Mn 1.5-4 %

Mo 0.3-1.5%

Cr 17.5-20%

Ni 10-13 %

N 0.2-0.5%

wherein the remainder is substantially composed of iron].

6. (Amended) Semi-finished and finished products according to [one of claims 1 to] claim 5, [characterized in that] wherein [they are either sheets or profile rods] the steel material is a sheet or a plate with [a] substantially constant [cross-section over their length] material thickness.

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Marked-up Claims 1-12

7. (Amended) [Semi-finished and finished products] Finished product

according to claim [6] 1, [characterised in that] wherein it is a shaft with a diameter that varies along its axial length [the profile cross-section is circular, elliptical, quadratic, hexagonal, octagonal, L-shaped, cross-shaped, U-shaped or double T-shaped].

8. (Amended) [Semi-finished and finished products according to claim 6, characterised in that the steel material is a sheet or a plate with substantially constant material thickness] Method for manufacturing semi-finished and finished products from corrosion-resistant, precipitation hardenable austenitic special steel with a high interstitially dissolved nitrogen content, wherein a steel material with the following chemical composition is firstly manufactured:

C 0.082-0.115%;

Mn 1.5-4%;

Mo 0.3-1.5%;

Cr 17.5-20%;

Ni 10-13%; and

N 0.2-0.5%

wherein the remainder is substantially composed of iron, in that the material worked in the still hot, or re-heated state into semi-finished and finished products with a substantially smooth surface, and as required can also be cold-worked, and in that subsequently a

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Marked-up Claims 1-12

precipitation hardening treatment is undertaken that affects at the most a part of the volume of the semi-finished and/or finished products.

9. (Amended) [Finished product according to one of claims 1 to 5, characterised in that it is a shaft with a diameter that varies along its axial length] Method according to claim 8, wherein inductive precipitation hardening treatment is undertaken in a temperature range of 300°C to 550°C.

10. (Amended) Method [for manufacturing semi-finished and finished products from corrosion-resistant, precipitation hardenable, austenitic special steel with a high interstitially dissolved nitrogen content, characterised in that a steel material with the following chemical composition is firstly manufactured:

C 0.02-0.12%

Mn 1-16%

Mo 0-3%

Cr 16-26%

Ni 0-15%

N 0.2-0.9%

wherein the remainder is substantially composed of iron, in that the material worked in the still hot, or re-heated state, and as required can also be cold-worked, and in that

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Marked-up Claims 1-12

subsequently a precipitation hardening treatment is undertaken that affects at the most a part of the volume of the semi-finished and/or finished products] according to claim 8, wherein inductive precipitation hardening treatment is undertaken such that the precipitation hardening only occurs in a surface layer with a layer thickness of 0.5 mm at the most.

11. (Amended) Method according to claim 8 [10], [characterised in that] wherein [inductive precipitation hardening treatment is undertaken in a temperature range of 300°C to 550°C] the material is substantially endless material or rod material or respectively sheet material that is passed continuously through an induction apparatus.

12. (Amended) Method according to claim 8 [10], [characterised in that] wherein [inductive precipitation hardening treatment is undertaken such that the precipitation hardening only occurs in a surface layer with a layer thickness of 0.5 mm at the most] instead of inductive treatment, precipitation hardening is done by laser irradiation.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

The invention relates to semifinished and finished products made from special corrosion-resistant precipitation-hardened austenitic steel containing a large amount of interstitially dissolved nitrogen, comprising substantially smooth surfaces. The invention also relates to a method for producing corresponding semifinished and finished items. The aim of the invention is to produce semifinished and finished items and to provide an economical method for the production thereof, combining both solidity and resistance to corrosion. This is achieved by precipitation-hardening areas of the steel material.

Semi-finished and finished products made of austenitic special steel,
and method for the manufacture thereof

Priority: German Utility Patent No. 299 14 269 of 19.08.1999

5 German Utility Patent No. 299 14 802 of 24.08.1999

German Utility Patent No. 299 16 517 of 15.09.1999

German Utility Patent No. 299 21 121 of 01.12.1999

German Utility Patent No. 299 21 813 of 12.12. 1999

10 The present invention relates to semi-finished and finished products manufactured from corrosion-resistant precipitation hardenable austenitic special steel with a high content of interstitially dissolved nitrogen, with substantially smooth surfaces. The present invention also relates to a method for manufacturing corresponding semi-finished and finished products.

15 Within the framework of the present description, semi-finished and finished products with substantially smooth surfaces are understood as semi-finished and finished steel products, the dimensions of corresponding surface structures are to some extent comparable with the dimensions of the material itself, that is to say in particular with the thickness of the material, in contrast to components such as, for example, screws, 20 which are to be considered as sharply notched components. In particular, in the case of the articles to which the present invention relates, corresponding structures are typically in the region of clearly more than 1 mm. The present invention mainly extends to profile parts and/or sheets, that is to say to parts having a substantially constant profile over their length, be this delimited by a circular, elliptic, polygonal or 25 a more or less irregular contour. In the case of profiled rods, the material thickness should as a rule be more than 1 mm, and in the case of sheets more than 0.2 mm.

Many special steel components have great requirements placed upon them with respect to strength and corrosion resistance. Typical examples of such components are tension

rods, tie rods, supports, pipes, sleeves, sheets, profiles with different cross-sections and so forth. Other components with variable cross-sections such as, for example, shafts, which have different, graduated diameters in some areas, have to satisfy great requirements with respect to corrosion resistance and strength. The present invention 5 is directed towards such articles.

Semi-finished and finished products of this type made from austenitic corrosion-resistant special steel firstly generally obtain their strength by means of multiple cross-section reduction by cold rolling, selectively with or without intermediate solution annealing treatment. Lastly, for suitable components heat treatment in a furnace, a 10 precipitation hardening, typically in a nitrogen atmosphere, takes place. There is, nevertheless the risk of chromium carbide precipitation, which leads to reduction of the corrosion resistance and increase in the risk of inter-crystalline corrosion. Moreover, heat treatment in the furnace inevitably causes precipitation hardening over the entire volume of material. A partial increase in the strength of specific component 15 areas is thus not possible. Precipitation hardening in the furnace is extraordinarily time and cost-intensive, and increases the price of the corresponding products by several times as much.

Appropriate substances are described, for example, in European Patent No. 545 852 B1, and European Patent Application 774 589 A1. 20 The present application takes priority from German Utility Patent Nos. 299 14 269, 299 14 802, 299 16 517, 299 21 121 and 299 21 813, the contents of which are incorporated herein in their entirety by this reference to them.

A self-tapping screw made from corrosion-resistant material is known from DE-OS 198 15 670 that is inductively hardened in the lower cutting and thread area. With such 25 screws, the hardened structures nevertheless form very fine and relatively thin-walled surface structures that have been subjected to a significant micro-structural change (work-hardening) in an earlier cold-working, so in this case inductive precipitation hardening found successful application as it was substantially limited to the threads only.

With respect to this prior art, the object of the present invention is to provide semi-finished and finished products and a method for their manufacture, that obtain a particularly advantageous combination of strength and corrosion-resistance with inexpensive manufacture.

5 This object is solved in that the steel material is precipitation hardened in a zone-wise manner.

Precipitation hardening is preferably done inductively, wherein alternatively laser irradiation is also conceivable.

10 The method for inductive precipitation hardening (or done by laser irradiation) has the substantial advantage that the areas and also the layer thickness within which precipitation hardening takes place can be completely, purposely selected. In this way strength and corrosion-resistance can be optimised by area, as generally the areas hardened by precipitation tend to be somewhat more susceptible to corrosion, but on the other hand have greater strength.

15 It has been shown, nevertheless, that inductive hardening is unexpectedly possible for the articles under discussion here, even though this appeared problematic for austenitic steels. This hardening method is possible in particular for austenitic steels with the composition (percentages by weight) set out in claim 4. Properties with respect to the combination of strength and corrosion-resistance are particularly advantageous when 20 the ranges of composition according to claim 6 are followed. In the preferred variations the amounts of the components set out in detail in claims 4 and 5 respectively are coordinated with one another such that the remaining quantity of iron is between 65 and 68%.

25 By means of these alloy quantities, the steel obtains a good degree of corrosion-resistance, comparable with A2 qualities. The limiting of the nitrogen content corresponds to its natural solubility in austenite, which increases with increased manganese content. Together with inductive precipitation hardening, the upper carbon content limit largely prevents formation of chromium carbide, which would preferably adapt itself to grain size, and lessens susceptibility to inter-crystalline corrosion.

will be evident from the following description of preferred embodiments and the attached drawings.

There is shown, in:

- Figure 1 a profile part with a quadratic cross-section,
- 5 Figure 2 a profile part with L-shaped cross-section,
- Figure 3 a profile part with the cross-section of a regular octagon,
- Figure 4 a profile part with a U-shaped cross-section,
- Figure 5 a profile part with a cross-shaped cross-section,
- Figure 6 a profile part with a double T cross-section, and
- 10 Figure 7 different views of a shaft manufactured from the steel material according to the invention.

In Figures 1 to 6, different profile parts are shown that differ substantially in their cross-section, which however remain constant in the case of the respective profile part over their length, wherein the length of the profile parts can in principle, be as desired.

15 For practical purposes, such profile parts typically have lengths of approximately 6 m, but if they are sufficiently flexible they can also be wrapped into rolls and are then transportable in significantly greater lengths. Clearly, hollow profiles such as, for example, pipes, with the greatest variation of cross-section shapes can also be manufactured with the features according to the invention.

20 In the case of the profile parts shown, the longitudinal edge, sharp corner areas can be more or less greatly rounded off. Precipitation hardening of the parts is done inductively and can thus be selectively limited to areas as desired, that is to say to different longitudinal sections and to different cross-section areas.

Hardening is preferably done in a surface layer, the total cross-section of which

25 comprises between 1 and 50% of the total profile cross-section, or respectively the wall thickness of the steel material.

Inductive precipitation hardening of components of austenitic special steels reduces the heat treatment duration to the region of several seconds to a few minutes. This method – in contrast to overall treatment – offers the possibility of selectively increasing the strength/hardness of areas at risk of failure, while in remaining areas optimum toughness properties are retained.

Claims

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1. Semi-finished and finished products in the form of sheets, profiles or shafts made of corrosion-resistant, precipitation hardenable, austenitic special steel with a high interstitially dissolved nitrogen content, with substantially smooth surfaces, characterised in that the steel material is precipitation hardened in a zoned manner, and in that the steel has a chemical composition within the following ranges:

5 C 0.08 – 0.115%

10 Mn 1.5 – 4%

Mo 0.3 – 1.5%

Cr 17.5 – 20%

Ni 10 – 13%

N 0.2 – 0.5%

wherein the remainder is substantially composed of iron.

15 2. Semi-finished and finished products according to claim 1, characterised in that the steel material is inductively precipitation hardened in a zoned manner.

20 3. Semi-finished and finished products according to claim 1 or 2, characterised in that they are at least partly hardened in a surface layer, wherein the thickness of the precipitation hardened layer is less than 50%, preferably less than 30% and in particular less than 10% of the material thickness measured perpendicular to the surface.

25 4. Semi-finished and finished products according to one of claims 1 to 3, characterised in that they are either sheets or profile rods with a substantially constant cross-section over their length.

5. Semi-finished and finished products according to claim 4, characterised in that the profile cross-section is circular, elliptical, quadratic, hexagonal, octagonal, L-shaped, cross-shaped, U-shaped or double T-shaped.

amended

6. Semi-finished and finished products according to claim 6, characterised in that the steel material is a sheet or a plate with substantially constant material thickness.
- 5 7. Finished product according to one of claims 1 to 3, characterised in that it is a shaft with a diameter that varies along its axial length.
8. Method for manufacturing semi-finished and finished products from corrosion-resistant, precipitation hardenable austenitic special steel with a high interstitially dissolved nitrogen content, characterised in that a steel material with the following chemical composition is firstly manufactured:

C	0.082 – 0.115%
Mn	1.5 – 4%
Mo	0.3 – 1.5%
Cr	17.5 – 20%
15 Ni	10 – 13%
N	0.2 – 0.5%

wherein the remainder is substantially composed of iron, in that the material worked in the still hot, or re-heated state into semi-finished and finished products with a substantially smooth surface, and as required can also be cold-worked, and in that subsequently a precipitation hardening treatment is undertaken that affects at the most a part of the volume of the semi-finished and/or finished products.

9. Method according to claim 8, characterised in that inductive precipitation hardening treatment is undertaken in a temperature range of 300°C to 550°C.
- 20 10. Method according to claim 8 or 9, characterised in that inductive precipitation hardening treatment is undertaken such that the precipitation hardening only occurs in a surface layer with a layer thickness of 0.5 mm at the most.

amended

11. Method according to one of claims 8 to 10, characterised in that the material is substantially endless material or rod material or respectively sheet material that is passed continuously through an induction apparatus.
- 5 12. Method according to one of claims 8 to 10, characterised in that instead of inductive treatment, precipitation hardening is done by laser irradiation.

unamended

12. Method according to claim 10 or 11, characterised in that inductive precipitation hardening treatment is undertaken such that the precipitation hardening only occurs in a surface layer with a layer thickness of 0.5 mm at the most.

5

13. Method according to one of claims 10 to 12, characterised in that the steel has the following chemical composition (given in percentages by weight):

10 C 0.082 – 0.115%

 Mn 1.5 – 4%

 Mo 0.3 – 1.5%

 Cr 17.5 – 20%

 Ni 10 – 13%

15 N 0.2 – 0.5%

 wherein the remainder is substantially composed of iron.

14. Method according to one of claims 10 to 13, characterised in that the material is substantially endless material or rod material or respectively sheet material that is passed continuously through an induction apparatus.

20

15. Method according to one of claims 10 to 13, characterised in that instead of inductive treatment, precipitation hardening is done by laser irradiation.

(12) NACH DEM VERTRÄG ÜBER DIE INTERNATIONALE ZUSAMMENARBEIT AUF DEM GEBIET DES
PATENTWESENS (PCT) VERÖFFENTLICHTE INTERNATIONALE ANMELDUNG

(19) Weltorganisation für geistiges Eigentum
Internationales Büro



(43) Internationales Veröffentlichungsdatum
1. März 2001 (01.03.2001)

PCT

(10) Internationale Veröffentlichungsnummer
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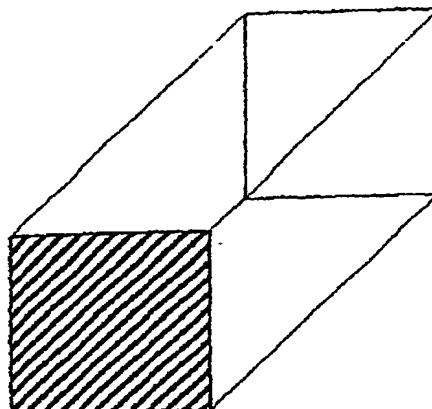
Veröffentlicht:

- Mit internationalem Recherchenbericht.
- Vor Ablauf der für Änderungen der Ansprüche geltenden Frist; Veröffentlichung wird wiederholt, falls Änderungen eintreffen.

Zur Erklärung der Zweibuchstaben-Codes, und der anderen Abkürzungen wird auf die Erklärungen ("Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations") am Anfang jeder regulären Ausgabe der PCT-Gazette verwiesen.

(54) Title: SEMIFINISHED AND FINISHED PRODUCTS MADE OF AUSTENITIC SPECIAL STEEL AND METHOD FOR THE PRODUCTION THEREOF

(54) Bezeichnung: HALBZEUGE UND FERTIGPRODUKTE AUS AUSTENITISCHEM EDELSTAHL UND VERFAHREN ZU DEREN HERSTELLUNG



(57) Abstract: The invention relates to semifinished and finished products made from special corrosion-resistant precipitation-hardened austenitic steel containing a large amount of interstitially dissolved nitrogen, comprising substantially smooth surfaces. The invention also relates to a method for producing corresponding semifinished and finished items. The aim of the invention is to produce semifinished and finished items and to provide an economical method for the production thereof, combining both solidity and resistance to corrosion. This is achieved by precipitation-hardening areas of the steel material.

(57) Zusammenfassung: Die vorliegende Erfindung betrifft Halbzeuge und Fertigprodukte, hergestellt aus korrosionsbeständigem ausscheidungshärtbaren austenitischen Edelstahl mit einem hohen Gehalt an interstitiell gelöstem Stickstoff, mit im Wesentlichen glatten Oberflächen. Ebenso betrifft die vorliegende Erfindung auch ein Verfahren zur Herstellung entsprechender Halbzeuge und Fertigprodukte. Um Halbzeuge und Fertigprodukte sowie ein Verfahren zu deren Herstellung zu schaffen, die bei preisgünstiger Herstellung eine besonders günstige Kombination von Festigkeit und Korrosionsbeständigkeit erzielen, wird erfindungsgemäß vorgeschlagen, daß das Stahlmaterial zonenweise ausscheidungshärtet ist.

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BURNS DOANE

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COMBINED DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION		Attorney's Docket No. 029777-008
<p>As a below-named inventor, I hereby declare that:</p> <p>My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name:</p> <p>I BELIEVE I AM THE ORIGINAL, FIRST AND SOLE INVENTOR (if only one name is listed below) OR AN ORIGINAL, FIRST AND JOINT INVENTOR (if more than one name is listed below) OF THE SUBJECT MATTER WHICH IS CLAIMED AND FOR WHICH A PATENT IS SOUGHT ON THE INVENTION ENTITLED:</p> <p><u>SEMI-FINISHED AND FINISHED PRODUCTS MADE OF AUSTENITIC SPECIAL STEEL, AND METHOD FOR THE MANUFACTURE THEREOF</u></p> <p>the specification of which</p> <p>(check one) <input type="checkbox"/> is attached hereto; <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> was filed on <u>August 17, 2000</u> as Application No. <u>PCT/DE00/02800</u> and was amended on _____; (if applicable)</p> <p>I HAVE REVIEWED AND UNDERSTAND THE CONTENTS OF THE ABOVE-IDENTIFIED SPECIFICATION, INCLUDING THE CLAIMS, AS AMENDED BY ANY AMENDMENT REFERRED TO ABOVE;</p> <p>I ACKNOWLEDGE THE DUTY TO DISCLOSE TO THE OFFICE ALL INFORMATION KNOWN TO ME TO BE MATERIAL TO PATENTABILITY AS DEFINED IN TITLE 37, CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS, Sec. 1.56 (as amended effective March 16, 1992);</p> <p>I do not know and do not believe the said invention was ever known or used in the United States of America before my or our invention thereof, or patented or described in any printed publication in any country before my or our invention thereof or more than one year prior to said application; that said invention was not in public use or on sale in the United States of America more than one year prior to said application; that said invention has not been patented or made the subject of an inventor's certificate issued before the date of said application in any country foreign to the United States of America on any application filed by me or my legal representatives or assigns more than twelve months prior to said application;</p> <p>I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code Sec. 119 and/or Sec. 365 of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate as indicated below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate on this invention having a filing date before that of the application(s) on which priority is claimed:</p>		

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COMBINED DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY

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COUNTRY/INTERNATIONAL	APPLICATION NUMBER	DATE OF FILING (day, month, year)	PRIORITY CLAIMED
Germany	299 14 269.8	19 August 1999	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Germany	299 14 802.5	24 August 1999	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Germany	299 16 517 5	15 September 1999	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Germany	299 21 121.5	1 December 1999	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Germany	299 21 813.9	12 December 1999	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>

I hereby appoint the following attorneys and agent(s) to prosecute said application and to transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith and to file, prosecute and to transact all business in connection with international applications directed to said invention:

41
 William L. Mathis 17,337
 Robert S. Swoeker 19,085
 Diane N. Mandros 22,174
 Dennis S. Duffing, Jr. 22,010
 Norman H. Stepan 22,716
 Ronald L. Grudziecki 24,770
 Frederick G. Mathaud, Jr. 26,003
 Alan E. Kopacki 35,615
 Regis E. Shaffer 36,399
 Samuel C. Miller, III 27,360
 Robert G. Mukai 28,531
 George A. Hovanec, Jr. 28,773
 James A. LaBarre 28,612
 E. Joseph Gess 28,510
 R. Danny Huntington 27,903

Eric H. Weisblatt 30,305
 James W. Peetson 26,057
 Terence Samek Rea 30,447
 William C. Rowland 30,888
 T. Gene Dillahany 25,423
 Patrick C. Keane 32,838
 B. Jefferson Boggs, Jr. 32,924
 William H. Benz 25,932
 Peter K. Skoff 31,817
 Richard J. McGrath 29,198
 Matthew L. Schneider 32,814
 Michael G. Savage 32,596
 Gerald F. Swins 30,113
 Charles F. Wieland III 32,026
 Bruce T. Wieder 33,815

Todd R. Walmsley 34,040
 Ronald S. Jilka 31,979
 Harold R. Brown III 36,341
 Allan R. Baum 36,086
 Brian P. O'Shaughnessy 32,747
 Kenneth B. Leffler 36,073
 Fred W. Hanaway 32,238
 Wendi L. Weinstan 34,436
 Mary Ann Dillahany 34,576
 Donna M. Meuth 36,607
 Mark H. Kressoff 42,765

21839

and: Scott W. Cummings, Reg. No. 41,567

Address all correspondence to:



Ronald L. Grudziecki
 BURNS, DOANE, SWECKER & MATHIS, L.L.P.
 P.O. Box 1404
 Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1404

21839

Address all telephone calls to: Scott W. Cummings (703) 836-6620.

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

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FULL NAME OF SOLE OR FIRST INVENTOR Reinrich FRIEDRICH	SIGNATURE 	DATE 13/06/02
RESIDENCE Gross-Rohrheim, Germany	DEX	CITIZENSHIP Germany
POST OFFICE ADDRESS Benzstrasse 15, 68649 Gross-Rohrheim, Germany		

18/06 '02 16:11 FAX +49 2752 109171

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BURNS DOANE

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**COMBINED DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY
FOR UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION
Supplemental Sheet**

Attorney's Docket No.
029777-008

2/00		FULL NAME OF SECOND JOINT INVENTOR, IF ANY	SIGNATURE	DATE
		Reinhard SCHMOOCK	Reinhard Schmoock	18.06.2002
RESIDENCE			CITIZENSHIP	
Netphen, Germany			Germany	
POST OFFICE ADDRESS				
Wiesengarten 26, 57240 Netphen, Germany				